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# Australian Story to air how the Matildas have come to be world beaters

OVER the past year, the Matildas have lifted the Tournament of Nations trophy and defeated some of the powerhouses of world football and now Australian Story tells how they got there.

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Sam Kerr takes a photo with a fan. Pic: AAP

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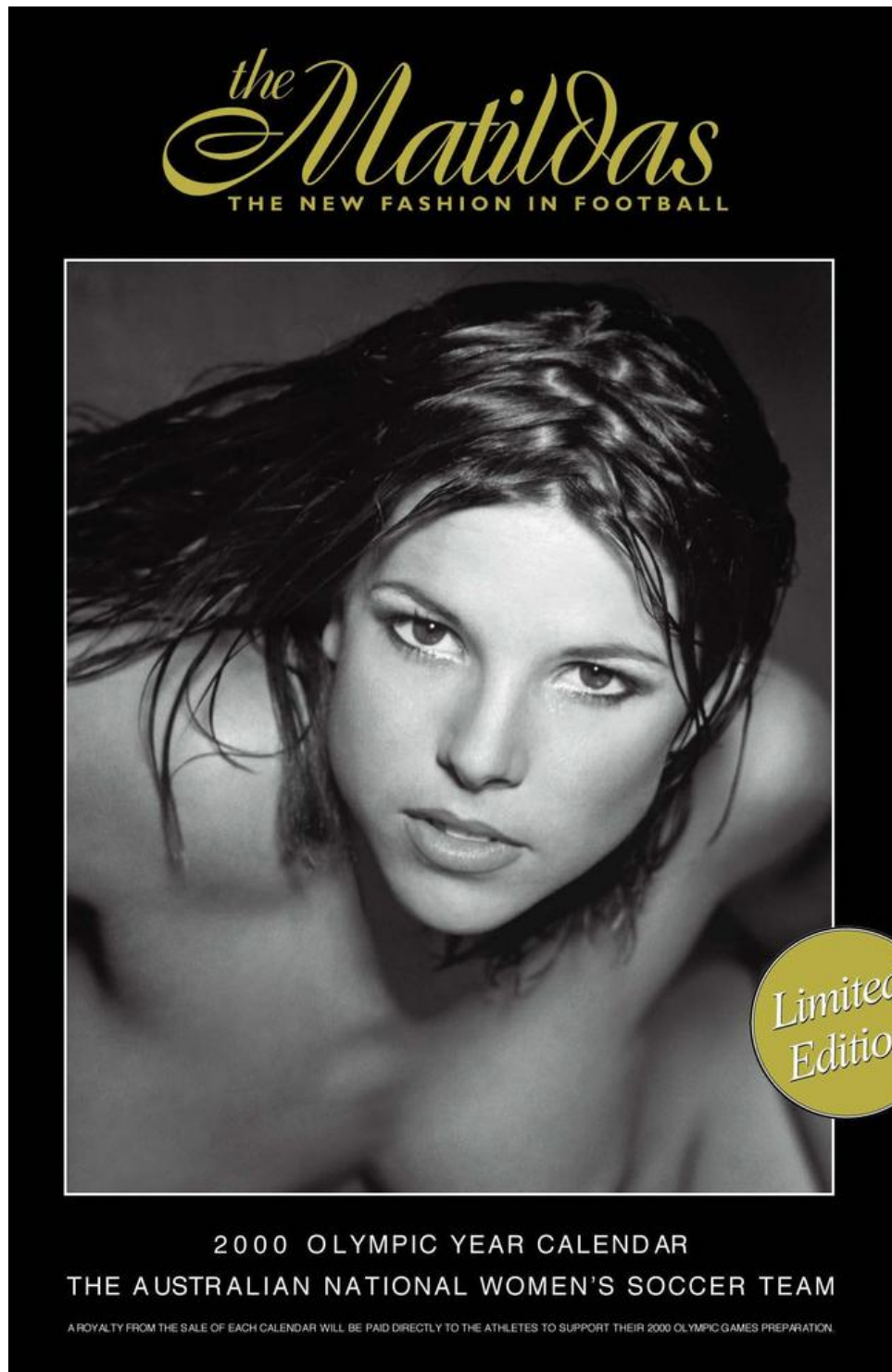
The one-time underdogs of international football have their sights set on next month's Asian Cup to add to their growing trophy chest.



Sam Kerr takes a photo with a fan wearing her jersey. Pic: AAP

But as tonight's Australian Story reveals, it's been a long hard road to fame.

Born out of the women's rights movements of the 1970s, the Matildas coming of age has coincided with the wave of 'girl power' sweeping the world. Gone are the days when sponsors were so thin on the ground that players stripped off for a nude calendar, or paid their own way to compete in international tournaments.



Amy Taylor on the cover of that Matildas 2000 calendar..

The Matildas have gone from being 'circus freaks' to celebrity footballers. The current crop of players know how much they owe to previous generations who fought to play the game they love.

As they head off to the Asian Cup in a few weeks' time, the Matildas hope to continue their climb up the world rankings knowing they have the nation behind them.

"If I look at the Matildas now and how the public is receiving us, then it's worth all the sacrifices that myself and all the other players have gone through." Former Matilda, Julie Dolan

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"It's great the kids know who the Matildas are. For me after 15 years being on the team it's still surreal to hear the girls and fans scream my name and whoever they idolise, so it's fantastic." Matilda's co-captain, Lisa de Vanna

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The Matildas in the 1970s. Pic: Supplied by ABC



The Matildas, complete with handmade sign, in the 1990s. Pic: Supplied by ABC

***Australian Story — Pitch Perfect airs tonight (Monday, March 12) at 8pm on ABC and ABC iview.***

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